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# Shift Rotation Among Correctional Officers as a Source of Perceived Job Related Stress

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SHIFT ROTATION AMONG CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS  
AS A SOURCE OF PERCEIVED JOB RELATED STRESS

BY


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## Introduction

Rotating shifts are a common way of life for correctional officers. Shift rotation among correctional officers as a source of perceived job related stress has been included in studies of correctional officers, but is usually only briefly touched upon as one of the many components of stress. There is little research on the effect of rotating shifts as a source of perceived job related stress. Since many believe rotating shifts are a source of stress for officers, further research in this area should be done.

My formal hypothesis for this study is that shift rotation among correctional officers has an effect on correctional officer stress. Although there are many definitions of stress, for the purpose of this study stress is defined as conscious nervous tension. Many authors believe that stress develops from a person's reactions to certain situations that are threatening or exert pressure on them. It is felt that whatever the cause, stress depends not on the outside event but on how one reacts to it. For the purpose of this study, stress was not formally defined to the correctional officers because I was looking for perceptions of stress, or how an officer reacts to certain situations.

This study is based in part upon a survey of the current literature in two related fields: (1) stress caused by shift

work in general, and (2) job stressors experienced by correctional officers. In addition, a survey research project was employed to gather more contemporary information. A questionnaire was designed and then distributed to all correctional officers at the Duval County Jail in Jacksonville, Florida. This questionnaire is included in its entirety as an Addendum to this paper.

The questionnaires were handed out at each shift change (before roll call) personally by the author. The purpose of the study was explained and all immediate questions were answered. Due to time limitations, the form was not pre-tested. Open-ended questions were chosen because it was felt they were best suited to get the officers' personal views. The officers were told that the results would be made available to both them and their administration.

A total of 144 questionnaires were distributed and 105 were returned for analysis. The questionnaires were analyzed and the results constitute the second part of this study.

## Chapter I

### Literature Review:

#### Shift Work as a Cause of Stress

Shift work, defined as a working schedule that is different from traditional daytime hours, is becoming more important as both management and labor see it as a way to decrease costs. Shift work has an impact on workers and their families in both positive and negative ways. Recently, interest has increased in the effects of shift work on the quality of life as well as physical and mental health. Some observers view shift work as a pleasant break in routine and the opportunity for workers to spend more quality time with their families; others feel shiftwork causes physical and mental stress due to the lack and regularity of sleep, as well as the disruption of family activities.

Approximately 10 million full-time nonfarm hourly and salaried workers, or one employee in six, are shift workers. By occupational groupings, factory operatives account for the largest number of these workers, with services workers a close second (Siegel, 1982). Shift workers work either a fixed shift, always working the same hours of the day or night, or a rotating shift, which rotates or alternates periodically. Most commonly, workers change shifts every four weeks.

In the distant past, most work was done during the daylight hours. Craftsmen during the 13th century had often worked by

candle light but complained that night work diminished both their productivity and the quality of their work (Seigel, 1982). (As artificial lighting improved, however, more work could be done after dark, and twenty-four hour employment became more common.)

One of the first jobs that became "round the clock" was that of night watchmen. Most of these men were assigned to protect townspeople from fires or possible crime. In the field of justice the old city watch gradually became a twenty-four hour police force. This necessitated the appearance of shift work in justice. Later, as life became more complex, some people could not just work during the day and sleep at night. Night work became necessary to make and distribute consumer goods. Shift work increased greatly during the industrial revolution. Many companies found it most profitable to keep their machines running all the time. This practice has continued to expand and many manufacturing plants never close.

During the 1930's and 1940's laws were enacted that required private-sector employers to pay premium wages for work days that exceeded prescribed standards, creating an employee incentive for shift work. However, public workers were excluded from this practice. Many police, fire, and other civil servants were paid a set salary and then required to work different shifts. Most are now compensated, minimally, for their shift work (Wynn, 1977). The growth of unions led to pressure for greater shift differentials.

Problems relating to shift work became an area of interest to employers when various studies demonstrated that shift work often raised medical costs, increased absenteeism, and resulted in higher turnover (Blackmore, 1979; Cheek & Miller, 1983). The human body rhythm not only controls when a person wants or requires sleep, but has a complex effect on a whole range of biological and psychological functions.

A majority of biological rhythms are linked to the "circadian rhythm" or night rhythm. Studies indicate that cardiac rhythm slows during sleep and arterial pressure varies in similar ways. Therefore, when a person works at night their cardiovascular system is depressed, but to a smaller extent than if they were asleep. Changes are also noted in respiratory functions and digestive secretion (I. Puce, 1971).

Many problems are associated with shiftwork and its impact on family life. Perhaps the most difficult situation is for the families with two or three small children in a poor housing situation. Clearly household patterns and routines must change to accommodate a spouse who sleeps during the day one week and at night the next. Many workers complain that they often missed having family meals together. This was especially true in workers who rotated between three shifts (Maurice, 1975).

Recent studies show that these changes can be modified to help the shift worker adjust. The majority of studies, in particular those of Bonjerin in the Netherlands, have shown that

in most cases the individual's adjustment to shift rotation is only partial (Maurice, 1975). Sleep disturbance is one area that shows a marked difference in shift work. Thii-Eversen, in an inquiry conducted in Denmark, showed that 60 percent of shift workers, as compared with 11 percent of day workers, suffered from sleep disturbances. He added that the inability to make good the fatigue associated with a succession of night shifts results in an accumulation of fatigue, with a disastrous effect of the sympathetic nervous system (Maurice, 1975). Shift workers stated that sleep during the day was less refreshing than sleep at night (Mott, Mann, McLonlen & Warwick, 1965). Furthermore, 83 percent said they felt most tired on the night shift. An intensive study of workers in an electric power plant in Holland (Phillips Factories, 1958) suggests, however, that age plays an important part in determining the extent of fatigue (Mott, et al, 1965).

Another area of sleeping problems deals with difficulties of falling and remaining asleep. The studies by Bjernel et al (1948) and Ulick (1957), singled out inadequate housing as the major barrier to adequate sleep. Much of this can be blamed on the family being crowded into small apartments that are poorly insulated for noise control. Home environment noises were said to be the major source of sleep problems.

A third problem related to sleep is that of fatigue and its effect on the worker's personality. If the worker can sleep



through the daytime activity noise of his spouse and children, then his personality is less affected. However, if sleep is interrupted due to household noise, serious marital and family strain may be a problem.

Shiftworkers also complain about the effect of changing shifts on their appetite and digestion. Wyatt and Marriott (1953) reported that 43 percent of the workers in their study took some form of patent medicine to allay disturbances of digestion (Mott, et al, 1965).

In conclusion, there seems to be evidence that shift work caused <sup>(2)</sup>problems for certain time-oriented body functions. Two areas that are especially effected are sleep and digestion. Unfortunately, there is still little information that deals specifically with rotation of shift on stress. Many of these studies may include workers on rotating shifts but fail to specifically mention this as a distinction.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review: Correctional Officers and Job-Related Stress

Stress is now recognized as an important aspect of the correctional officer's job. Although stress is certainly not a new problem, it has recently received more attention. This attention has been focused, in part, due to the public's growing concern over the functioning of the criminal justice system.

Until recently little research has been conducted on correctional officers as a group. According to Frances Cheek and Marie Miller, most of the research on stress has been done on the more glamorous and visible police officer (Cheek & Miller, 1983). They found this interesting as their studies revealed correctional officers often face more hostility and are often under more stress than police officers.

To place correctional officer stress in context, two comprehensive studies of police officers published a few years ago are included. A Northwestern University study ranked policing as the second most stressful occupational category after that of air traffic controller (Blackmore, 1978). The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health completed a study of more than 2,300 police officers in 29 departments around the country. This study revealed that 37 percent had

serious health problems, 23 percent had serious alcohol problems, 20 percent serious problems with their children and 10 percent problems with drugs (Blackmore, 1978).

Other studies conclude that police officers have among the highest rates of heart disease and stomach disorders. Divorce rates are nearly twice as high as for other occupations and suicide rates are estimated between two and six times the national average (Blackmore, 1978).

For correctional personnel, stress takes its toll in similar ways. Early studies of correctional personnel show their rate of heart attacks to be one of the highest among groups of state employees (Wynne, 1977). In New York State, the correctional staff had three times as much time off for disability as the state average. Heart problems, alcoholism and emotional disorders accounted for 60 percent of the staff's disability leave (New York, 1975).

The only area in which both police and correctional officers rated well was the infrequency of mental health treatment. This may be explained, in part, by the officers' hesitation in seeking help for fear of jeopardizing their job. Another explanation may be that the traditional "macho" working personality of officers in both areas seeks to deny the existence of much of the stress (Cheek & Miller, 1983). Many officers feel they should be able to "handle" this stress and rarely seek outside help. This may, in part, explain the officers high rate of coronary and stomach problems.

What are some of the stressors? One of the key steps in examining stress is to identify some of the particular "stressors" that are present in that particular profession. Dr. John Stratton, Director of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Psychological Services Unit, cites four types of police stressors that in my opinion may be applied to the correctional officer. To paraphrase Mr. Blackmore, these stressors include:

1. Stressors external to the department, such as verbal abuse from the public, leniency officers perceive in the court, and the inability of the criminal justice system to stem crime;
2. Stressors originating in the organization, such as low pay, excessive paper work, arbitrary rules and few opportunities for advancement;
3. Stressors connected with the performance of police duties, such as rotating shifts, work overload, boredom, fear and danger;
4. Stressors particular to the individual officers, such as being a member of a minority group, marital difficulties or the inability to get along with peers (Blackmore, 1978).

Some of the external stressors correctional officers often have to face revolve around poor job image, public apathy and/or hostility, and a frustration with the criminal justice system as a whole to stop crime.

One of the basic areas of external stress is that of job image. As community attitudes become more negative to crime and criminals, the job of the correctional officer is often looked upon in a very negative light. Many feel the criminal justice system is ineffective and this negative attitude toward the system is often projected upon the correctional officer.

Corrections has historically never been a very popular career option. Unlike police officers, few children aspire to be correctional officers. A study by Lou Harris in 1975 revealed that only one percent of the teenagers surveyed indicated they had considered corrections as a potential career (Jacob & Restky, 1975). In a study of the Illinois correctional force, 57 percent of the respondents chose the occupation for reasons unrelated to corrections (Jacobs, 1978). Officers stated they were out of work and just needed a job. Others stated they were just putting in their time until a different job became available.

Many officers feel the public still views them as the harsh and unflattering stereotype often seen in Hollywood movies. Convinced that this image is firmly in the public's mind, many officers avoid mentioning the fact that they are correctional officers. Officers often see themselves on the lowest rung of the law enforcement ladder. This embarrassment, rooted in the lack of public acceptance and understanding of the officers job, ranks high on the list of problems facing correctional officers (May, 1976).

A conflict of the goals of corrections is a major organizational stressor facing many officers today. Corrections has shifted from incarceration to include rehabilitation. No longer are officers simply responsible for the security and physical well being of the offender, now the former are expected to become active in the rehabilitation process. This often causes a role conflict.

Officers are told they must maintain strict security while being supportive of the goals of treatment and custody. (This problem was first identified by Cressey in 1965.)

Again, research in this area is minimal. Sykes (1958) was one of the first to look at the impact on stress for those working with a "captive clientele". Brodsky (1977) outlined a long-term stress problem associated with working with this type of clientele. Cressey (1959) examined the role-conflict issue as a source of stress in both custody and treatment institutions. Johnson (1977) looked at the balancing of custody versus treatment as a way for correctional officers to alleviate stress.

Stressors originating from within the organization include low pay, problems with administration, excessive paperwork and few opportunities for advancement. A primary source of occupational stress is often the bureaucracy above them rather than the inmates and surroundings. As one man put it, "an officer's more concerned about covering his rear end with the administration than with the inmates" (May, 1976).

In 1978, Cheek and Miller examined a group of 143 New Jersey state and county correctional officers. Their responses to the questionnaires showed that stress was manifested in many physical illnesses including hypertension, heart attacks and ulcers (Cheek & Miller, 1978). Interestingly, the New Jersey correctional officers blamed administrative aspects of their job more than the job itself or the inmates and the threat of physical harm.

Officers feel frustrated by the lack of administrative support. They complain that they have little or no influence in the decision-making of their department and feel that they, as the front line workers, should have more input (Cheek & Miller, 1982). Officers are also frustrated by the rigid supervisory structure. In the para-military structure, most officers are accountable to their immediate supervisor. Officers often complain that if they do not get along with their immediate supervisor they often get less desirable duty. Officers are certainly not encouraged to complain. They are taught to "take orders" without questions, but these orders may go against their morals. Unfortunately, many officers feel they have little or no recourse (Cheek & Miller, 1982).

Officers feel their departments do not support them in times of trouble. Many feel they are "guilty until proven innocent". While all professionals make mistakes, in corrections an error in judgment can result in a loss of life or serious injury. This is compounded by the fact that officers rarely get an opportunity to deliberate over the proper course of action.

In a Massachusetts Correctional Department study (1981) that examined patterns of career mobility and retention among correctional officers in the Massachusetts department, turnover rates were quite high. According to this study, 1 in 10 left within six months, and 1 in 5 left during the first year. Some left for other jobs in law enforcement and others stated low pay

as their reason for leaving the field. CONtact Incorporated also conducted a national survey in 1982 and found the average turnover rate to be 24.5 in 1981 and 28.9 in 1979 (CONtact, Inc., 1982). The reasons for turnover included location of the facility, low pay, better job opportunities, and odd hours of work. These odd hours were often the evening and weekend hours that rotating shifts required.

The job of the correctional officer is often one that results in role conflict due to unclear and contradictory directions. For example, Edgar May's study of prison guards in 1976 found a large difference between what the correctional officers were told to do and what they actually did. In fact, one guard stated, "never mind what the rule book says, the fact is you've got to work it out for yourself" (May, 1976). Officers mentioned that lack of clarity and, particularly, consistency regarding what is expected of them is a stressor that links officers from one part of the nation to the other (May, 1976).

Many of these stressors cause physical and emotional problems that may lead to "burn out" as a way of responding to the pressure. The "burnout response" is an observable response that is often found in the helping professions (Neiderhoffer, 1969; Maslach, 1976). Burnout has been referred to as a disease of over-commitment which ironically causes a lack of commitment (Glicken, 1983). It is often observed in long-term employees in stressful occupations. Burnout is often a result of a real or



perceived career dead-end. Interestingly, one of the more tangible signs of career dead end often mentioned by correctional officers is low pay and a lack of personal growth.

Stressors connected with Stratten's third category, the performance of duty, include rotating shifts, work overload, boredom and fear. Rotating shifts cause constant upheaval and change in daily activities. This is often mentioned as one of the biggest problems facing the officer's family (Crouch, 1980). The family's social life must change to accommodate an officer that is not off when most other working people are. Many spouses complain of being lonely both nights and weekends. Officers end up spending less time with their children and it is harder to maintain social relationships with non-correctional families. This often limits socializing to include only other correctional couples. Holidays and family events often have to play a secondary role.

Officers often cite problems with their families as a result of shift rotation. Pat James and Marie Nelson have a whole chapter in their book Police Wife (1982), devoted to sex and the shift work wife. One wife complained, "when we want time together alone, we have to schedule it...but unfortunately my emotional needs don't operate on a schedule" (Pat James & Marie Nelson, 1982).

Job satisfaction is also often affected by shift rotations. Sydney White, in his study of the effect of shift rotation on

police job stress (1981) found that participation and social support showed significant reductions in stress for persons transferred from rotating shifts. In fact rotating shift workers in general typically reported having fewer friends than either day workers or non-rotating shift workers (Mott, 1965). According to Sydney White's study of job satisfaction, dissatisfaction tended to decrease significantly when officers were moved to fixed shifts (White, 1981).

Although the length of adjustment varies from individual to individual, Kroes, Kahn & Kirkham (1976) found that the average adjustment to shift rotation takes from one to two weeks. During this period of adjustment, lack of sleep is often a problem. This may impair judgment, heighten levels of irritability, and slow physical reflexes. While much of the correctional officer's job is routine, a constant alert state is required to cope with sudden developing situations.

Stressors particular to the individual officer, according to Blackmore (1978), include marital difficulties and the inability to get along with peers. Many of the marital and family problems of the correctional officer have already been discussed. It is important to note, however, that Frances Cheek (1978) found in her survey of New Jersey officers that the divorce rates were twice as high for officers as the national average for all citizens.

These studies make it quite apparent that the job of the correctional officer is very stressful. The studies confirm that officers have higher than average rates of heart disease and stomach disorders, while divorce rates and suicide rates are nearly twice as high as for other occupations.

### Chapter III

#### Field Research

The field research project investigated shift rotation among correctional officers as a source of job related stress. It was inspired by and loosely patterned after a study by Cheek and Miller for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO. That study, Prisoners of Life, examined occupational stress among state correctional officers in 1982 (Cheek & Miller, 1982).

The present study consisted of a questionnaire that was distributed to uniformed correctional personnel at the Duval County Jail in Jacksonville, Florida. (This facility houses all male detainees arrested in Duval County regardless of the severity of charges.) The jail was selected for this study for several reasons, primarily because it was geographically easily accessible and has a progressive and supportive administration.

The questionnaires (see the Addendum) were distributed to all uniformed staff present on the day of distribution. Originally, a random selection of line officers were to be selected, but a decision was made to distribute the questionnaire to all the officers. Unfortunately, a control question as to an officers rank was not included and may have biased some of the data gathered.

The questionnaires were handed out at each shift change by the author before roll call. The purpose of the study was explained and all immediate questions were answered. The officers were told that the results would be made available to both them and the administration. A total of 144 questionnaires were distributed and 105 questionnaires were returned for analysis. The Duval County Jail employs approximately 260 officers. This number includes the jail annex staff who were not included in this study.

The questionnaire consisted of two pages plus a letter of introduction and explanation by Michael Berg, Chief of the Duval County Jail. It was divided into three parts. Part I gathered demographic and occupational data. It included five personal items: age, sex, ethnic background, marital status, and education. It also covered current shift assignments, years in corrections and one question each regarding sick leave and job satisfaction.

Part II contained questions pertaining to different aspects of the job, and asked the officers to rate these questions on a scale of 1-4 (1 = lowest, 4 = highest) as to how stressful the officer perceived each aspect to be. This section included physical working conditions, conflicts with detainees and administration, as well as salaries, rotating shifts, and boredom. Part II totaled ten items.

Part III consisted of three questions that required a written response. This section addressed the officers' feelings regarding training, positive and negative aspects of rotating shifts, and how stressful they felt their jobs were.

A summary of the sample is displayed on Table I. Based on the data collected the mean correctional officer in this study is a white male, 28 to 32 years of age, married, and has attended junior college but currently lacks a two-year degree. He has been in corrections for a little more than five years, has been absent between four and five days for sick leave in the past year, and is mildly satisfied with his job.

The research sample was older than originally expected. For example, the largest responding age group consisted of 31 subjects in the 23-27 group. The next largest group (24), moreover, was 42 and over, which may have raised the mean age disproportionately. This high mean age may be caused in part by the inclusion of supervisory personnel. The data on sex was not very useful, since only fifteen of the reporting sample were female. Ethnic background was as expected, with 34 of the respondents being non-white. Years in corrections (service) were interesting as a larger (larger than expected) percentage of the officers (42 percent of the sample) had eleven or more years of service.

The null hypothesis for this study is that rotating shiftwork has no effect on correctional officers' stress. The initial focus

on rotating shift work and officer stress was broadened to include occupational stress in general, one portion of which included the impact of rotating shifts on correctional officers.

Although the initial hypothesis was that rotating shift work has no effect on correctional officer's stress, the survey instrument was designed so all aspects of correctional officer stress was covered. The concept upon which I based the questionnaire was the worker's self-perception of stress.

Due to the amount of data available for analysis, it was necessary to limit the focus of this study so that the material would be manageable for the scope of the project. The most significant approach consisted of correlating demographic factors with how a person responded to questions on shiftwork. (Correlation coefficients were computed for all ten items in Part II and for the five demographic factors from Part I [Table II]). A correlation coefficient is a statistical measure that was created to gauge bivariate association for interval level measures. A correlation coefficient is an index of association normed between -1 and +1; the more positive distance from 0 the stronger the association. In the correlation coefficients used in this study, a .05 or less coefficient was considered significant. None of the coefficients for question 8 on rotating shifts were found to be significant for the demographic data of age, education, years of service, sick leave or job satisfaction.

This supports the null hypothesis that rotating shiftwork does not have an effect on stress in the correctional officers' job.

Although the main focus on relationships involving rotating shiftwork as a stressor showed no significant correlations, some other areas of the survey did reveal interesting results. For example, increasing age was shown as a negative in the correlation coefficient in all but two categories. This is interpreted to show that an increase in age resulted in a decreasing satisfaction in the areas of conflict with detainees, political pressure, conflict with other employees and administration, physical working conditions, lack of opportunities for growth and advancement, boredom, and danger of physical harm. The two exceptions are salary and rotating shifts.

Another interesting correlation dealt with the question pertaining to conflict with administration and years of service. When these were correlated, a 0.0395 coefficient was computed. This appears to support the view that the more years of service an officer has on the job, the more stressful conflicts with the administration are.

Correlations involving job satisfaction proved statistically significant in several situations. In regards to sick leave, very significant results were observed. A 0.0003 coefficient was reported, showing a strong correlation between conflict with administration and time lost to sick leave. An even stronger correlation (0.0001) was reported between conflict with the



administration and job satisfaction. This was the most significant correlation in the study and showed job satisfaction as being weak when conflict with administration is very stressful.

Political pressure was also significant (0.0169) when correlated with job satisfaction. This appears to show that officers are less satisfied with their jobs when they feel the influence and stress of political pressure. It is important to note that in Duval County a large number of correctional officers stated they wanted to become police officers and have accepted their current job until a police opening becomes available. It would have been interesting to gather data on the number of officers who aspired to become police officers, but this question was not included in the questionnaire.

In the recent past police aspirants had to serve as correctional officers before they could become police officers. This has been changed within the past few years, but many correctional officers continue to work in the hope that they will be able to make the transition from correctional officer to police officer, although being a correctional officer is no longer a requirement. A list of current officers who will be considered for police trainee appointments are prepared before each police academy class. I believe that this continued use of correctional officers as a recruiting base, but without any formal commitment to employ them as police, may be the reason for such a strong response on the questions dealing with political pressure

and administration. If an officer wants to become a police officer, the current political and administrative context limits their opportunities for advancement. Officers stated that one unfavorable report in their file could diminish their chance to become a police officer.

Conflict with other employees and job satisfaction was also significant (0.0093). This may be related to how well an officer "fits in" with his fellow officers. Interestingly, peer influence was positively associated with stress. Officers seemed to indicate that interactions with other officers heightened their stress. Similar findings were reported by Cullen, Link, Wolfe, and Frank (1985), in their study of "The Social Dimensions of Correctional Officer Stress." This is also consistent with research positing that officer peer relations are not rewarding (Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Lombardo, 1981).

Lack of opportunities for growth and advancement and job satisfaction also was significant (0.0039). Apparently, many officers feel their career may be at a dead end and, therefore, less satisfying.

Salaries and job satisfaction is significant (0.0039). Officers feel they are not getting paid what they are worth. Many feel that they are "step-children" in law enforcement and are being paid less than police officers. Most stated they felt their salaries should be comparable to police officers.

A second series of correlations is displayed in Table III. This set examined how each of the ten questions in Part II were related to other Part II questions. This correlation is displayed in full in Table III. Again, the main focus was rotating shifts. A few factors were significant. The most significant correlation (0.0029) involved rotating shifts and salaries. Officers believe that they are not paid enough for rotating shiftwork. Another area of significance was boredom and rotating shiftwork (0.0148). Most officers felt rotating shiftwork can be boring. Officers were also stressed by the lack of opportunity for growth and by their salaries. This is reasonable as officers see no great rise in salaries when growth in their field is not readily available.

Part III required a written response. Answers were grouped, coded, and entered into the computer. Question I (T1) asked officers if they felt they received adequate training to perform their job. Their answers were grouped into yes or no responses. Additional comments were noted, but only those requesting additional training were measured. The majority of the sample (86%) felt their training was sufficient. The remaining officers (14%) stated they felt additional training after a six month to a year period would be helpful. As a group, most were quite satisfied with the amount and type of training they received.

Question II was a two-part question that asked officers how they felt about rotating shifts. The first part (T2) asked the positive aspects, and part two (T3) asked for the negative aspects.

On the positive side (T2), answers were grouped into two categories: (1) no positive aspects, and (2) more personal flexibility. Other written responses were noted but not measured. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents who answered stated there were no positive aspects of rotating shifts, while two percent stated that it did offer increased personal flexibility. Written answers in this area ranged from a variety of job duties that rotating shifts provided, being able to do things during "off" (less crowded) times, fewer traffic problems, and in some cases an ability to spend more time with their families. Many officers stated that rotating shifts gave them a chance to do a variety of jobs. For example, during day shift, contact with prisoners and court officials occupied the majority of their time. Night shift often required more paperwork duties and had less inmate contact. Officers like the flexibility of switching these and other duties every month.

The second part of this question (T3) was coded into three groups: (1) family problems, (2) health problems, and (3) both family and health problems. Again, additional comments were noted but not measured. Forty percent of those answering mentioned family problems and disruptions of normal family relations as a main source of problems. Some officers stated one of these negative issues and some officers stated two or more. A few stated that rotating shifts had caused marital problems because they were not able to spend time both at night and on the weekends

with their families. A few mentioned that rotating shifts had an effect on their marriage failing and problems with their children. Officers mentioned that they feared for their families' safety at night when they were on night shift. Thirty-six percent mentioned health problems as being a negative aspect of rotating shifts. Most stated they were unable to get enough sleep when they were on night shift and had to sleep during the day which was difficult when there were young children in the home. Many stated they got more colds on night shift and felt this may also be attributed to lack of sleep as they did not feel as healthy when they were tired. A portion of this group also mentioned stomach disorders and weight gains as they rarely ate three balanced meals when they were on the night shift. Finally, 24 percent mentioned both family problems and health related problems as a negative aspect of rotating shift.

Question 3 (T4) had officers rate how stressful on a scale of 1-4 they perceived their job to be. These were grouped into four groups: (1) not stressful at all; (2) little; (3) average; and (4) very stressful. Ten percent felt it was not at all stressful, 20 percent felt it was a little stressful, 28 percent said it was average stress, and 43 percent stated it was very stressful. It seems apparent that officers do see stress as an important aspect of their job. The largest percentage of officers (43%), stated they perceived their job to be very stressful. These figures are displayed in full in Table IV.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The data gathered in this research support the null hypothesis that rotating shiftwork has no significant effect on stress for correctional officers. It seems apparent that although officers do not like shiftwork, other factors such as conflicts with administration, lack of opportunity, and political pressures are much more stressful.

Correctional officers go into their jobs with the prior knowledge that the job requires shiftwork. They also know that jails and other institutions must have a twenty-four hour staff on duty. Many correctional officers aspire to be police officers, and rotating shifts are also necessary in that job. I conclude that this prior knowledge makes rotating shifts more palatable and is viewed as a necessary function of the job.

It appears that some of these workers become correctional officers with the ultimate goal of becoming police officers. This may be unrealistic, as the number of candidates far outnumber the opportunities to become a police officer and resulting frustrations often lead to serious morale problems. This also may play a significant part in the reported stress (.009 conflict with other employees) among fellow correctional officers. If these officers feel they are competing among themselves for a precious few police openings, it is doubtful that work relationships between officers will be positive.

It is important that alternative career goals and career counseling be established to deal with these frustrations. Other outlets that promote healthier employee relationships should be explored to improve morale in a positive way. Education would be helpful to help further raise the professionalism of the department and enable officers to gather the credentials to move up in the system if they so desire. It would also enable officers to earn more money due to educational incentive programs. Finally, related courses in stress management and other areas of interest could be integrated into training programs that would specifically deal with some of the problems facing officers.

Additional research should be done to further explore the areas only briefly touched upon in this paper. I believe that much could be done to help correctional officers deal more effectively with stress. All efforts should be made to retain officers who have the experience and training. It is important for the administrators to look at the total cost of training new officers. It is felt that it would be far less expensive and more cost effective to offer programs that would make the officers' job less stressful and retain trained, experienced officers.

TABLE I

<u>AGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>CURRENT SHIFT</u>	
18-22	7	DAY (7-3)	39
23-27	31	EVENING (3-11)	45
28-32	20	NIGHT (11-7)	20
33-37	15		
38-42	8		
42 and over	24		
<u>SEX</u>		<u>YEARS IN CORRECTIONS</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
MALE	90	0-1	16
FEMALE	15	1-3	23
		3-5	22
		6-10	22
		11-15	11
		16-20	10
		Over 20	1
<u>ETHNIC BACKGROUND</u>		<u>HOW MANY DAYS HAVE YOU BEEN OUT SICK DURING THE PAST YEAR</u>	
WHITE	70	0-2	47
BLACK	31	3-5	30
HISPANIC	0	6-10	10
ASIAN	2	11-15	5
OTHER	1	16-20	1
<u>MARITAL STATUS</u>		21 and over	6
UNMARRIED	23	<u>HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR JOB?</u>	
MARRIED	47	VERY SATISFIED	38
DIVORCED	14	MILDLY SATISFIED	41
WIDOWED	1	MILDLY DISSATISFIED	13
REMARIED	18	VERY DISSATISFIED	5
<u>EDUCATION</u>			
NO H. S. GRADUATE	0		
G.E.D.	7		
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	20		
SOME JUNIOR COLLEGE	36		
JUNIOR COLLEGE GRADUATE	13		
SOME COLLEGE	16		
COLLEGE GRADUATE	12		



TABLE II  
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

	AGE	EDUC	SRVC	SICK	SATIS
<u>S1</u>	-0.02753 0.7825 103	0.05497 0.5832 102	0.14733 0.1375 103	-0.15158 0.1383 97	0.06847 0.5097 95
<u>S2</u>	-0.12851 0.1936 104	-0.00830 0.0337 103	0.11639 0.2393 104	0.07988 0.4343 98	0.24334 0.0169 96
<u>S3</u>	-0.04445 0.6541 104	0.07154 0.4727 103	0.09915 0.3166 104	0.04366 0.6695 98	0.26435 0.0093 96
<u>S4</u>	-0.08318 0.4059 102	0.11376 0.2573 101	0.02172 0.8285 102	0.04332 0.6752 96	0.09947 0.3402 94
<u>S5</u>	-0.10391 0.3011 101	-0.11868 0.2396 100	0.20521 0.0395 101	0.36061 0.0003 95	0.41925 0.0001 93
<u>S6</u>	-0.13451 0.1734 104	0.04275 0.6681 103	0.10917 0.2700 104	0.03003 0.7691 98	0.22154 0.0301 96
<u>S7</u>	0.00838 0.9337 101	-0.02422 0.8110 100	0.09636 0.3378 101	-0.02493 0.8105 95	0.29674 0.0039 93
<u>S8</u>	0.10988 0.2840 97	0.12525 0.2240 96	0.11326 0.2693 97	0.05033 0.6357 91	0.04670 0.6639 89
<u>S9</u>	-0.17029 0.0903 100	0.20173 0.0453 99	0.00223 0.9825 100	-0.11349 0.2761 94	0.20603 0.0488 92
<u>S10</u>	-0.17029 0.8775 104	0.20173 0.4019 103	0.00223 0.3139 104	-0.11349 1.0000 98	0.20603 0.2238 96

Questionnaire used to compile data for Table II and Table III.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the following questions using this scale.

not at all                      little                      average                      very much

How stressful are the following aspects of your job?

1. Conflict with detainees.
2. Political pressure.
3. Conflict with other employees.
4. Physical working conditions.
5. Conflict with administration.
6. Lack of opportunities for growth and advancement.
7. Salaries.
8. Rotating shifts every four weeks.
9. Boredom.
10. Danger of physical harm.

Part II of the Questionnaire

Table II  
(continued)

TABLE III

## CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
<u>S1</u>	1.00000 0.0000 103	0.24352 0.0114 103	0.22612 0.0216 103	0.30932 0.0016 101	0.14157 0.1600 100	0.04249 0.6700 103	0.07607 0.4543 99	0.05096 0.6220 96	0.33944 0.0006 99	0.41583 0.0001 103
<u>S2</u>	0.24852 0.0114 103	1.00000 0.0000 104	0.24297 0.0129 104	0.32825 0.0008 102	0.55453 0.0001 101	0.45841 0.0001 104	0.22117 0.0270 100	0.23988 0.0180 97	0.28162 0.0045 100	0.24979 0.0106 104
<u>S3</u>	0.22612 0.0216 103	0.24297 0.0129 104	1.00000 0.0000 104	0.26904 0.0063 102	0.34996 0.0003 101	0.18781 0.3162 104	-0.10124 0.3162 100	0.15980 0.1179 97	0.31629 0.0013 100	0.17378 0.0777 104
<u>S4</u>	0.30932 0.0016 101	0.32825 0.0008 102	0.26904 0.0063 102	1.00000 0.0000 102	0.24539 0.0144 99	0.25594 0.0094 102	0.11346 0.2660 98	0.23411 0.0224 95	0.16057 0.1123 99	0.26350 0.0075 102
<u>S5</u>	0.14157 0.1600 100	0.55453 0.0001 101	0.34996 0.0003 101	0.24539 0.0144 99	1.00000 0.0000 101	0.40543 0.0001 101	0.14471 0.1551 98	0.03858 0.7105 95	0.09810 0.3340 99	0.06777 0.5007 101
<u>S6</u>	0.04249 0.6700 103	0.45841 0.0001 104	0.18781 0.0562 104	0.25594 0.0094 102	0.49543 0.0001 101	1.00000 0.0000 104	0.32783 0.0009 100	0.12216 0.2333 97	0.26762 0.0071 100	0.03976 0.6887 104
<u>S7</u>	0.07607 0.4543 99	0.22117 0.0270 100	-0.10124 0.1179 100	0.11346 0.0224 98	0.14471 0.7105 98	0.32783 0.2333 100	1.00000 0.0029 101	0.30425 0.0000 94	0.27893 0.0148 96	0.17924 0.1365 100
<u>S8</u>	0.05096 0.6220 96	0.23988 0.0180 97	0.15980 0.1179 97	0.23411 0.0224 95	0.03858 0.7105 95	0.12216 0.2333 97	0.30425 0.0029 94	1.00000 0.0000 97	0.25199 0.0148 93	0.15228 0.1365 97
<u>S9</u>	0.33944 0.0006 99	0.28162 0.0045 100	0.31629 0.0013 100	0.16057 0.1123 99	0.09810 0.3340 99	0.26762 0.0071 100	0.27893 0.0059 96	0.25199 0.0148 93	1.00000 0.0000 100	0.38232 0.0001 100
<u>S10</u>	0.41582 0.0001 103	0.24979 0.0106 104	0.17378 0.0777 104	0.26350 0.0075 102	0.06777 0.5007 101	0.03976 0.6887 104	0.17924 0.0744 100	0.15228 0.1365 97	0.38232 0.0001 100	1.00000 0.000 104

TABLE IV

(T1)	1. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU RECEIVE ADEQUATE TRAINING TO PERFORM YOUR JOB?				
		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cum Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Cum Percent</u>
	Yes	87	87	86.139	86.139
	No	14	101	13.861	100.000
	2. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ROTATING SHIFT?				
(T2)	A. What are the positive aspects?				
		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cum Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Cum Percent</u>
	No Positive Aspects	54	54	98.182	98.182
	More Time With Family and Flex.	1	55	1.818	100.000
(T3)	B. What are the negative aspects?				
	Less Family Time	31	31	39.744	39.744
	More Health Problems	28	59	35.987	75.641
	1 and 2 Combined	19	78	24.359	100.000
(T4)	3. HOW STRESSFUL IS YOUR JOB?				
		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cum Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Cum Percent</u>
	Not At All	10	10	9.804	9.804
	Little	20	30	19.608	29.412
	Average	20	58	27.451	56.863
	Very Much	44	78	43.137	100.000

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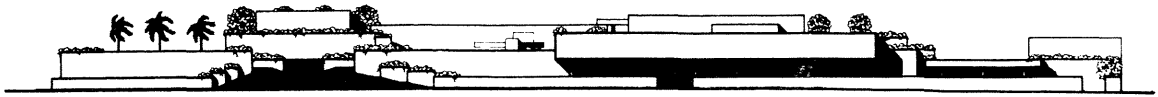
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**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

CONSOLIDATED CITY OF JACKSONVILLE



501 EAST BAY STREET • POST OFFICE BOX 2070 • JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

DALE CARSON  
Sheriff

November 1, 1985

TO: ALL JAILS DIVISION PERSONNEL

FROM: CHIEF MICHAEL A. BERG

SUBJECT: SURVEY

Ms. Phyllis Ingram, a graduate student from the University of North Florida, will be completing a questionnaire survey on shift rotation as it relates to Correctional Officer stress. This survey is authorized by this Division and your full cooperation is requested.

Your completed survey should be placed in the envelope provided, sealed and placed in the mail box for the Chief of Jails in the Releasing Office. These surveys will be collected by Ms. Ingram and the data tabulated.

Once again your cooperation is appreciated. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

MAB/kw

Distribution "A"



CORRECTIONAL OFFICER QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I

Please circle the best answer for each question.

1. Age  
18-22  
23-27  
28-32  
33-37  
38-42  
42 and over
2. Sex  
Male  
Female
3. Ethnic Background  
White  
Black  
Hispanic  
Asian  
Other
4. Marital Status  
Unmarried, never married  
Married, never divorced or widowed  
Divorced  
Widowed  
Remarried
5. Education  
Some High School but never graduated  
G.E.D.  
High School graduate  
Some Junior College but never graduated  
Junior College graduate  
Some College but never graduated  
College graduate
6. Current Shift  
Day (7-3)  
Evening (3-11)  
Night (11-7)
7. Years in Corrections  
0-1  
1-3  
3-5  
6-10  
11-15  
16-20  
Over 20 years
8. How many days have you been out sick during the past year  
0-2  
3-5  
6-10  
11-15  
16-20  
21 and over
9. How satisfied are you with your job?  
Very satisfied  
Mildly satisfied  
Mildly dissatisfied  
Very dissatisfied

Part II

Please rate the following questions using this scale

not at all    little    average    very much

How stressful are the following aspects of your job?

1. Conflict with detainees	1	2	3	4
2. Political pressure	1	2	3	4
3. Conflict with other employees	1	2	3	4
4. Physical working conditions	1	2	3	4
5. Conflict with administration	1	2	3	4
6. Lack of opportunities for growth and advancement	1	2	3	4
7. Salaries	1	2	3	4
8. Rotating shifts every 6 weeks	1	2	3	4
9. Boredom	1	2	3	4
10. Danger of physical harm	1	2	3	4

Part III

1. Do you feel that you received adequate training to perform your job?

2. How do you feel about rotating shift:  
a. What are the positive aspects?

b. What are the negative aspects?

3. How stressful is your job?

THANK YOU